

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 were pending in the application. By this paper, claims 16-22 have been canceled herein without prejudice as being directed to a non-elected invention, claims 1, 4-6, 24, and 25 have been amended, and claims 1-15 and 23-25 remain pending. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are hereby respectfully solicited in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-15, 23 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by European Patent Publication EP 0 839 656 (EP '656). The anticipation rejection is traversed based on the following grounds.

The applicants recognize that the examiner has been reading the limitation "at least one of said channel surfaces and said surface of the base" as referring to the conductive material being deposited on *either* the channel surfaces *or* the surface of the base. Based on the inherent ambiguity in the placement of "at least one," claim 1 has been amended herein to clarify its meaning and to remove the interpretation put forth in the official action. Claim 1 now reads "depositing a layer of conductive material so as to extend continuously over *said surface of the base and at least one of said channel surfaces.*" Thus, claim 1 now necessarily requires that conductive material be *deposited after formation of the channels* and on *both the surface of the base and at least one channel surface.* EP '656 does not teach or suggest at least these limitations, as discussed below and in the prior response.

The examiner has expressly agreed in the action at page 4, paragraph 7, that EP '656 discloses only that the channel surfaces are formed after the conductive material is deposited. Consequently, EP '656 does not disclose depositing a layer of conductive material over a channel surface, as there is no deposition step post channel formation.

Amended claim 1 now is clearly distinguishable over EP '656. EP '656 fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. Thus, Claim 1 and corresponding dependent claims 2-4, 6-8, 10-15, 23, and 24 are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by EP '656.

Claims Rejection 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 5, 9 and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as obvious over EP '656 in view of Yasuda, U.S. Patent No. 5,347,712 (Yasuda). Yasuda fails to teach or suggest the same limitations discussed above that are missing in EP '656. The combination of EP '656

and Yasuda also fails to disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1 and corresponding dependent claims 5, 9, and 25.

Election/Restriction

Claims 16-22 have been canceled herein without prejudice as directed to a non-elected invention. The applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in a timely filed divisional or other related application.

Other Amended Claims

Claims 4-6, 24, and 25 have also been amended herein. The only changes to these claims are to incorporate North American spelling for the terms "neighboring," "vaporizing," and "vaporization."

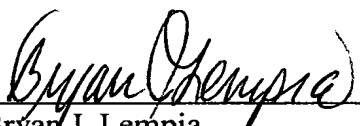

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-15 and 23-25 are in condition for allowance in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully solicited.

The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below in order to discuss any remaining issues or matters of form that will place this case in condition for allowance.

No fee is believed due at this time. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency, or to credit any overpayments, to Deposit Account No. 13-2855 of the undersigned's firm.

Respectfully submitted,

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